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**From:** Mashburn, Lori  
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DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 10-30-17.docx

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 10/30/17

Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison  
 Natalie Davis, Special Assistant to the Secretary

### **STATUS OF THE SECRETARY**

THIS WEEK: Secretary is on Personal leave

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TODAY: NEC PCC: ESA Section 7 meeting at WH EOB

### **WH COMMS REPORT** (submitted Friday, 10/27)

#### **Press Inquiries:**

- Small inquiries and logistical inquiries.
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#### U.S. Geological Survey

· **October 30 (tent.): Local USGS Release:** USGS will issue a release regarding a new USGS study that tracks millions of tons of rocks, gravel and silt carried by the Sauk River and its tributaries to the Skagit River.

#### Bureau of Reclamation

· **October 30:** Status Hearing on Columbia River System Operations EIS (OR). In Portland, Oregon, Federal District Court Judge Michael Simon will receive updates to the status report as part of ongoing litigation. The status conference hearing is scheduled for November 28. Reclamation, Bonneville Power Administration and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have four remaining years to complete the court-ordered EIS.

#### Bureau of Ocean Energy Management:

· **October/November TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders:** BOEM issue a note to stakeholders regarding Q3 FY17 study reports posting to ESPIS.

· **Nov TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders:** BOEM will issue a note to stakeholders on the path forward for future renewable energy leasing offshore the Atlantic Coast Request for Feedback (RFF).

#### Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

· **October 30: National OSMRE Release:** OSMRE will announce the winners of its 2017 Excellence in Surface Coal Mining Reclamation Awards. The awards are presented in partnership with the National Mining Association and will be formally presented on Nov. 6, 2017 in Wash, D.C.

### **CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE**

**UPCOMING ENR HEARING:** The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is holding a hearing to receive testimony on the potential for oil and gas exploration and development in the non-wilderness portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, known as the “1002 Area” or Coastal Plain, to raise sufficient revenue pursuant to the Senate reconciliation instructions included in H. Con. Res. 71.

**Timing:** November 2, 2017 at 9:30am

### **POLITICAL APPOINTEE UPDATE (updated)**

DOI politicals on board = 62

3 PAS confirmed as of 9/18.

6 nominated awaiting confirmation:

- Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.
- Pending Senate floor vote: Brenda Berman, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation.
- Pending Senate floor vote: Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals
- Pending Senate floor vote: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor
- Pending Hearing: Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs
- **Pending Hearing: Steve Gardner, Director, Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation**

Overall:

- Schedule C: 34 of 68 onboard; 2 starting; 6 in process
- NC-SES: 25 of 44 onboard; 4 starting; 1 in process
- PAS: 3 Confirmed; 5 Announced; 14 of 17 Submitted to PPO

### **SECRETARY SPEAKING INVITATIONS**

Accepted:

11/6 - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Board of Directors Reception (DC)

11/7 - DOI Veterans Day Ceremony (DC)

11/8 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Board of Directors Meeting (DC)

11/9 National WWI Memorial at Pershing Park (DC)

11/10 Tour of Manassas National Battlefield Park

11/11 - Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (DC)

11/11 - 64th Annual Veterans Day National Ceremony (DC)

11/11 - Veterans Day Observance at World War II Memorial (DC)

Open (date TBC)- Americans for Tax Reform (DC)

Open (date TBC)- Detroit Economic Club

Event Postponed by organizers due to fire - 10/21 DEPA BOD Meeting (CA)

Outstanding Invitations in Process:

11/15 Motorcycle Industry Council Symposium (Carson, CA)

12/1-2 Western Governors Association Annual Meeting (Phoenix, AZ)

12/9 Western Caucus Foundation Winter Policy Meeting (Las Vegas, NV)

Declining

10/30-11/3 International Mining and Resources Conference (Melbourne, Australia)

10/30 Interstate Mining Compact Commission Mid-Year Meeting (DC)

10/31 - George B. Hartzog, Jr. Awards and Speaker Program Clemson University (SC)

11/1 - 2017 SHIFT (Shaping How we Invest For Tomorrow) Festival (Jackson Hole, WY)

11/4 Governor Reynolds Annual Pheasant Hunt

11/8 WY Governor Annual Business Forum (Cheyenne, WY)

11/7-9 National Ranger Council Annual Meeting (Gettysburg, PA)

11/9 - America First Energy Conference hosted by Heartland Institute (Houston, TX)

11/9 - Bass Fishing Hall of Fame Induction Dinner at the Wonders of Wildlife (Springfield, MO)

11/13 Montana Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting (Billings, MT)

11/14 George Rogers Clark National Historical Park Quarter Launch (Vincennes, Indiana)

11/29 Association of California Water Agencies 2017 Fall Conference and Exhibition (Anaheim, CA)

12/5-7 America Outdoors Association's 29th Annual Marketing and Management Conference for Outfitters and Adventure Resorts (Reno, NV)

12/6 American Exploration and Mining Association Annual Meeting (Reno, NV)

12/8 - Valley Industry and Commerce Association Annual Meeting (Los Angeles, CA)

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT** (new)

**Hurricane Response/Recovery:**

NPS continues to coordinate with the U.S. Coast Guard and FEMA to address damaged vessels displaced due to recent hurricane activity. NPS crews are in the process of obtaining a count of the number of displaced vessels within the boundaries of the Caribbean National Parks, and are also searching for and marking underwater debris that may create a navigation hazard. At this time, approximately 180 vessels have been identified, with an unknown amount that may be submerged. Most of the displaced vessels are located at St. John.

USGS continues to support response efforts in Puerto Rico and has received a new Mission Assignment from FEMA to identify, flag, and survey high water marks for approximately 20 communities flooded by riverine or coastal flooding. Additionally, a team of five scientists from the USGS Landslides Hazards Program continue to provide detailed on-site analysis and technical assistance to FEMA in developing operational response plans. USGS crews have repaired approximately 75-percent of all gages that were damaged during Maria and Irma, and USGS continues to assist the National Weather Service with flood forecasting and warning missions.

The Department of Homeland Security reports that, in Puerto Rico, power has been restored to approximately 29 (+3)-percent of customers and the expectation is that 95-percent of Puerto Rico will be restored by December 15. Potable water has been restored to more than 80 (+5)-percent of clients served by the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority. Water levels at the Guajataca Dam continue to recede and evacuations are expected to be lifted around November 1. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, grid power has been restored for 31 (+1)-percent of the population on St. Thomas, 3 (no change)-percent on St. Croix, and efforts on St. John are expected to begin in two to three weeks. The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority estimates 90-percent of the power will be restored by November 23.

**OUTSIDE MEDIA OF INTEREST** (new)

## **Puerto Rick Gov. Rosselló Announces Cancellation Of Whitefish Energy Contract.**

On Sunday, Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló announced the cancellation of energy firm Whitefish Energy's contract with the Puerto Rico Electrical Power Authority. On [ABC World News Tonight](#) (10/29, story 5, 2:00, Llamas), Victor Oquendo reported on the "shock announcement from the governor." Rosselló: "I have asked the board of the power authority to invoke the cancellation clause in the contract immediately." Oquendo: "That contract with Whitefish Energy could soon be scrapped after the revelations the Montana power company had just two employees when it was awarded a massive \$300 million contract to restore power across the island," and that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke "hails from the same town the company is based in." [Politico](#) (10/29, Wilhelm) reports that Zinke said on Friday that he had "absolutely nothing to do' with the awarding of the contract to Whitefish."

## **Trump Plans To Shrink Two National Monuments In Utah.**

The [New York Times](#) (10/27, Friedman) reports Sen. Orrin Hatch on Friday "said...that President Trump had told him the administration would shrink" Bears Ears National Monument, created by former President Obama, and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, established by former President Clinton, based on the recommendation of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke. White House press secretary Sarah Sanders "said a final report would be released 'shortly,'" but she "did not confirm whether the president has signed off on it in part or in whole." Sanders said, "I'm not going to get ahead of the president's announcement on the specifics of that, but I can tell you he will be going to Utah in the first part of early December and we will release more details at that point, if not before."

## **Interior Department Kickstarts Initiative To Get Veterans Back Into America's Wild.**

[Breitbart](#) (10/27, Wong) reports that the Interior Department on Thursday welcomed "a gathering of veterans, hunting, and wildlife groups" for a "meeting to discuss how to improve access for hunting and fishing for veterans, particularly wounded warriors and those with PTSD." Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke "hosted the gathering to kickstart the initiative, one of his big priorities at the department." Addressing the group, Zinke said, "Our veterans are spending more time overseas than they are at home. And it has an effect on the VA. It has an effect on communities because normal has become over there, rather than over here, so I'm concerned about the experience when they come home that our public lands are once again returned to the people." Zinke continued, "Hunting and fishing is part of our legacy. And a lot of veterans are part of our hunting and fishing experience, and I am concerned that we've seen a lack of access, roads being closed, the wilderness, even."

**FOREST BILL HITS THE FLOOR:** The House is expected to this week consider legislation [H.R. 2936 \(115\)](#) from Rep. [Bruce Westerman](#) that would overhaul a host of forest management activities and that sponsors claim will address fire-borrowing,

streamline environmental review processes and minimize litigation. Critics say it undermines crucial environmental protections by using "the specter of wildfire to facilitate commercial logging on national forests shielded from public scrutiny and environmental review." The House Rules Committee meets on the measure Halloween at 5 p.m.

**Deadline Near For Tribal Members To Claim Settlement Money.**

The AP (10/27) reports that "American Indian tribal members and their descendants have until Nov. 27 to ask for their share of the remainder of \$3.4 billion in settlement money awarded to Native Americans after a major class-action lawsuit against the federal government." U.S. District of Columbia District Court Judge Thomas Hogan set the deadline in a January order, "after it was apparent that efforts to find tribe members to entitled to the award money listed as 'whereabouts unknown' were no longer as successful." According to the article, "unclaimed funds that remain after the deadline passes will be added to the Cobell Educational Scholarship Fund." Additional coverage was provided by the Billings (MT) Gazette (10/27, Wilson).

**Tribal Leaders Call Land-Use Bill Step In Right Direction.**

The AP (10/29, Windes) reports that "tribal leaders backed a House bill Wednesday that would give tribes the ability to control more of their land, instead of having to get federal approval for virtually any use." The American Indian Empowerment Act would "let tribes shift federally controlled trust land to 'restricted fee land,' a move that could save millions of dollars that tribes now spend on 'burdensome regulation,' while restoring a level of tribal sovereignty." The article adds that "while they called the bill a step in the right direction, however, witnesses said they are concerned about ambiguities in the thin, three-page bill that 'could allow state or local governments to implement property taxes on tribal land,' among other issues."

**How A 672,000-Gallon Oil Spill Was Nearly Invisible.**

The New York Times (10/29, Caron) reports that when an oil pipeline owned by LLOG Exploration, lying about a mile below the surface of the Gulf of Mexico, fractured in early October, about 672,000 gallons of oil escaped, in what appears "to be the largest since the Deepwater Horizon explosion in 2010." However, "hardly any of it was visible" on the surface, as "the oil seemed to have completely disappeared." The oil, under high pressure and seeping through a small fracture, escaped in droplets measured in microns, according to Lt. Cmdr. Steven Youde of the Coast Guard. Much of the oil was eaten by oil-degrading bacteria, with larger droplets that rose to the surface broken down by "sunlight, wind and wave action."

**Lawmakers: High User Fees Could Hurt Acadia, National Parks.**

The AP (10/27) reports that "Maine's congressional delegation is turning a critical eye on a U.S. Department of the Interior proposal to raise fees at national parks, including Acadia National Park." Sens. Susan Collins and Angus King "sent a letter to the department after an announcement that it's proposing increasing fees at 17 national

parks. The peak season increases would help offset overdue maintenance costs.” They “say the department should consider creating a National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund or Conservation Service Corp to help address the backlog.”

**Too Many Tourists: Crowding Is A Big Headache At National Parks And Theme Parks.**

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (10/28, Martin) reports that “across the country, people have been trekking to national parks, theme parks and other tourist attractions in record numbers during the past few years, creating an unexpected problem for the tourism industry: too many customers.” Without a solution, managers “fear that long lines and unruly crowds ultimately will turn off future visitors.”

**Parks Service Denies Permit For Giant Statue Of Naked Woman On National Mall.**

[CNN](#) (10/27, Tatum) reports that “the group behind an effort to bring a 45-foot-tall sculpture of a naked woman to the National Mall says it is ‘looking to formalize litigation’ after the National Park Service denied approval of the statue.” Natalie White, spokeswoman for Catharsis on the Mall, said in a statement, “We need a law firm willing to take on overly restrictive NPS rules that inappropriately seem to value the preservation of the perceived aesthetic of the National Mall over First Amendment activities. Historical use of this public space includes free-speech demonstrations that continue to shape the character of our country.”

**Feds Pull Funding For Black Panther Legacy Project In Berkeley After Backlash.**

The [Washington Examiner](#) (10/29, Lim) reports that “a Black Panther Party legacy project at the University of California Berkeley will no longer proceed after the National Park Service bowed to pressure applied by conservative organizations and pulled federal funding, according to a report.” The National Park Service “announced in September it would award \$98,000 to Ula Taylor, UC Berkeley’s incoming African-American studies chairwoman,” for the Black Panther Party Research, Interpretation & Memory Project. Spokesman Craig Dalby said, “After an additional review of the project, the [National Park Service] decided not to move forward with funding the project.”

**Culture Of Harassment At NPS ‘Completely Unacceptable’.**

The [Rafu Shimpo \(CA\)](#) (10/26) reports that Sen. Mazie K. Hirono, ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, “on Oct. 13 called for action to be taken following the release of a National Park Service (NPS) survey that found that 38 percent of NPS employees have been harassed or discriminated against in the past year.” The Interior Department “announced that NPS will receive additional resources to address complaints and expand training.” Hirono said, “Today’s announcement confirms what we’ve known for some time – there is a pervasive culture of workplace harassment in the National Park Service. Continued

silence and inaction are completely unacceptable. Working together, we can provide the necessary oversight and resources to ensure that all NPS employees regardless of age, race, gender, and sexual orientation have a safe working environment."

**FEDERAL REGISTER LISTINGS:**

Notices submitted to the Federal Register for Friday, October 27:

REG0007480 NPS NIC - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Region, Anchorage, AK N2857 -- This is a Notice of Inventory Completion pursuant to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of an inventory of human remains and associated funerary objects under the control of the Alaska Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The human remains and associated funerary objects were recovered from Kodiak Island Borough, Alaska. Notice 10/27/2017

REG0007481 NPS NIC - U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, DC N2860 -- This is a Notice pursuant to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), 25 U.S.C. 3003 of the completion of an inventory of human remains and associated funerary objects under the control of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, DC. The Human remains and associated funerary objects were removed from a site in the southern portion of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana, Glacier County, MT. Notice 10/27/2017

REG0007570 NPS National Register of Historic Places, October 14, 2017 -- The NPS is soliciting comments on the significance of properties nominated before October 14, 2017, for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or related actions. Notice 10/27/2017

REG0007566 ONRR Cancellation Meeting Notice: U.S. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Multi-Stakeholder Group Advisory Committee Meeting is scheduled for November 15-16, 2017. Notice 10/27/2017

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202.208.1694

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- **November TBD: Local BLM Release:** BLM-CO expects to issue a decision whether to modify GCC Energy's King II Mine in Montezuma County in southwest CO by 951 acres to allow GCC to access an estimated 4.66 million tons of recoverable Federal coal reserves for an additional 6.5 years of mining.

#### U.S. Geological Survey

- **October 30 (tent.): Local USGS Release:** USGS will issue a release regarding a new USGS study that tracks millions of tons of rocks, gravel and silt carried by the Sauk River and its tributaries to the Skagit River.

#### Bureau of Reclamation

- **October 30:** Status Hearing on Columbia River System Operations EIS (OR). In Portland, Oregon, Federal District Court Judge Michael Simon will receive updates to the status report as part of ongoing litigation. The status conference hearing is scheduled for November 28. Reclamation, Bonneville Power Administration and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have four remaining years to complete the court-ordered EIS.

#### Bureau of Ocean Energy Management:

- **October/November TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders:** BOEM issue a note to stakeholders regarding Q3 FY17 study reports posting to ESPIS.
- **Nov TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders:** BOEM will issue a note to stakeholders on the path forward for future renewable energy leasing offshore the Atlantic Coast Request for Feedback (RFF).

#### Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

- **October 30: National OSMRE Release:** OSMRE will announce the winners of its 2017 Excellence in Surface Coal Mining Reclamation Awards. The awards are presented in partnership with the National Mining Association and will be formally presented on Nov. 6, 2017 in Wash, D.C.

#### CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE

**UPCOMING ENR HEARING:** The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is holding a hearing to receive testimony on the potential for oil and gas exploration and development in the non-wilderness

portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, known as the “1002 Area” or Coastal Plain, to raise sufficient revenue pursuant to the Senate reconciliation instructions included in H. Con. Res. 71.

**Timing:** November 2, 2017 at 9:30am

#### **POLITICAL APPOINTEE UPDATE (updated)**

DOI politicals on board = 62

3 PAS confirmed as of 9/18.

6 nominated awaiting confirmation:

- Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.
- Pending Senate floor vote: Brenda Berman, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation.
- Pending Senate floor vote: Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals
- Pending Senate floor vote: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor
- Pending Hearing: Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs
- **Pending Hearing: Steve Gardner, Director, Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation**

Overall:

- Schedule C: 34 of 68 onboard; 2 starting; 6 in process
- NC-SES: 25 of 44 onboard; 4 starting; 1 in process
- PAS: 3 Confirmed; 5 Announced; 14 of 17 Submitted to PPO

#### **SECRETARY SPEAKING INVITATIONS**

Accepted:

11/6 - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Board of Directors Reception (DC)

11/7 - DOI Veterans Day Ceremony (DC)

11/8 – National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Board of Directors Meeting (DC)

11/9 – National WWI Memorial at Pershing Park (DC)

11/10 – Tour of Manassas National Battlefield Park

11/11 - Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (DC)

11/11 - 64th Annual Veterans Day National Ceremony (DC)

11/ 11 - Veterans Day Observance at World War II Memorial (DC)

Open (date TBC)- Americans for Tax Reform (DC)

Open (date TBC)- Detroit Economic Club

Event Postponed by organizers due to fire - 10/21 – DEPA BOD Meeting (CA)

Outstanding Invitations in Process:

11/15 Motorcycle Industry Council Symposium (Carson, CA)

12/1-2 – Western Governors Association Annual Meeting (Phoenix, AZ)

12/9 – Western Caucus Foundation Winter Policy Meeting (Las Vegas, NV)

Declining

10/30-11/3 – International Mining and Resources Conference (Melbourne, Australia)

10/30 – Interstate Mining Compact Commission Mid-Year Meeting (DC)

10/31 - George B. Hartzog, Jr. Awards and Speaker Program Clemson University (SC)

11/1 - 2017 SHIFT (Shaping How we Invest For Tomorrow) Festival (Jackson Hole, WY)

11/4 Governor Reynolds Annual Pheasant Hunt

11/8 – WY Governor Annual Business Forum (Cheyenne, WY)

11/7-9 National Ranger Council Annual Meeting (Gettysburg, PA)

11/9 - America First Energy Conference hosted by Heartland Institute (Houston, TX)

11/9 - Bass Fishing Hall of Fame Induction Dinner at the Wonders of Wildlife (Springfield, MO)  
 11/13 Montana Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting (Billings, MT)  
 11/14 – George Rogers Clark National Historical Park Quarter Launch (Vincennes, Indiana)  
 11/29 Association of California Water Agencies 2017 Fall Conference and Exhibition (Anaheim, CA)  
 12/5-7 America Outdoors Association's 29th Annual Marketing and Management Conference for Outfitters and Adventure Resorts (Reno, NV)  
 12/6 American Exploration and Mining Association Annual Meeting (Reno, NV)  
 12/8 - Valley Industry and Commerce Association Annual Meeting (Los Angeles, CA)

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT** (new)

**Hurricane Response/Recovery:**

NPS continues to coordinate with the U.S. Coast Guard and FEMA to address damaged vessels displaced due to recent hurricane activity. NPS crews are in the process of obtaining a count of the number of displaced vessels within the boundaries of the Caribbean National Parks, and are also searching for and marking underwater debris that may create a navigation hazard. At this time, approximately 180 vessels have been identified, with an unknown amount that may be submerged. Most of the displaced vessels are located at St. John.

USGS continues to support response efforts in Puerto Rico and has received a new Mission Assignment from FEMA to identify, flag, and survey high water marks for approximately 20 communities flooded by riverine or coastal flooding. Additionally, a team of five scientists from the USGS Landslides Hazards Program continue to provide detailed on-site analysis and technical assistance to FEMA in developing operational response plans. USGS crews have repaired approximately 75-percent of all gages that were damaged during Maria and Irma, and USGS continues to assist the National Weather Service with flood forecasting and warning missions.

The Department of Homeland Security reports that, in Puerto Rico, power has been restored to approximately 29 (+3)-percent of customers and the expectation is that 95-percent of Puerto Rico will be restored by December 15. Potable water has been restored to more than 80 (+5)-percent of clients served by the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority. Water levels at the Guajataca Dam continue to recede and evacuations are expected to be lifted around November 1. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, grid power has been restored for 31 (+1)-percent of the population on St. Thomas, 3 (no change)-percent on St. Croix, and efforts on St. John are expected to begin in two to three weeks. The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority estimates 90-percent of the power will be restored by November 23.

**OUTSIDE MEDIA OF INTEREST** (new)

**Puerto Rick Gov. Rosselló Announces Cancellation Of Whitefish Energy Contract.**

On Sunday, Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló announced the cancellation of energy firm Whitefish Energy's contract with the Puerto Rico Electrical Power Authority. On ABC World News Tonight (10/29, story 5, 2:00, Llamas), Victor Oquendo reported on the "shock announcement from the governor." Rosselló: "I have asked the board of the power authority to invoke the cancellation clause in the contract immediately." Oquendo: "That contract with Whitefish Energy could soon be scrapped after the revelations the Montana power company had just two employees when it was awarded a massive \$300 million contract to restore power across the island," and that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke "hails from the same town the company is based in." Politico (10/29, Wilhelm) reports that Zinke said on Friday that he had "absolutely nothing to do' with the awarding of the contract to Whitefish."

**Trump Plans To Shrink Two National Monuments In Utah.**

The [New York Times](#) (10/27, Friedman) reports Sen. Orrin Hatch on Friday “said...that President Trump had told him the administration would shrink” Bears Ears National Monument, created by former President Obama, and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, established by former President Clinton, based on the recommendation of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke. White House press secretary Sarah Sanders “said a final report would be released ‘shortly,’” but she “did not confirm whether the president has signed off on it in part or in whole.” Sanders said, “I’m not going to get ahead of the president’s announcement on the specifics of that, but I can tell you he will be going to Utah in the first part of early December and we will release more details at that point, if not before.”

**Interior Department Kickstarts Initiative To Get Veterans Back Into America’s Wild.**

[Breitbart](#) (10/27, Wong) reports that the Interior Department on Thursday welcomed “a gathering of veterans, hunting, and wildlife groups” for a “meeting to discuss how to improve access for hunting and fishing for veterans, particularly wounded warriors and those with PTSD.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke “hosted the gathering to kickstart the initiative, one of his big priorities at the department.” Addressing the group, Zinke said, “Our veterans are spending more time overseas than they are at home. And it has an effect on the VA. It has an effect on communities because normal has become over there, rather than over here, so I’m concerned about the experience when they come home that our public lands are once again returned to the people.” Zinke continued, “Hunting and fishing is part of our legacy. And a lot of veterans are part of our hunting and fishing experience, and I am concerned that we’ve seen a lack of access, roads being closed, the wilderness, even.”

**FOREST BILL HITS THE FLOOR:** The House is expected to this week consider legislation [H.R. 2936 \(115\)](#) from Rep. [Bruce Westerman](#) that would overhaul a host of forest management activities and that sponsors claim will address fire-borrowing, streamline environmental review processes and minimize litigation. Critics [say](#) it undermines crucial environmental protections by using “the specter of wildfire to facilitate commercial logging on national forests shielded from public scrutiny and environmental review.” The House Rules Committee [meets](#) on the measure Halloween at 5 p.m.

**Deadline Near For Tribal Members To Claim Settlement Money.**

The [AP](#) (10/27) reports that “American Indian tribal members and their descendants have until Nov. 27 to ask for their share of the remainder of \$3.4 billion in settlement money awarded to Native Americans after a major class-action lawsuit against the federal government.” U.S. District of Columbia District Court Judge Thomas Hogan set the deadline in a January order, “after it was apparent that efforts to find tribe members to entitled to the award money listed as ‘whereabouts unknown’ were no longer as successful.” According to the article, “unclaimed funds that remain after the deadline passes will be added to the Cobell Educational Scholarship Fund.” Additional coverage was provided by the [Billings \(MT\) Gazette](#) (10/27, Wilson).

**Tribal Leaders Call Land-Use Bill Step In Right Direction.**

The [AP](#) (10/29, Windes) reports that “tribal leaders backed a House bill Wednesday that would give tribes the ability to control more of their land, instead of having to get federal approval for virtually any use.” The American Indian Empowerment Act would “let tribes shift federally controlled trust land to ‘restricted fee land,’ a move that could save millions of dollars that tribes now spend on ‘burdensome regulation,’ while restoring a level of tribal sovereignty.” The article adds that “while they called the bill a step in the right direction, however, witnesses said they are concerned about ambiguities in the thin, three-page bill that ‘could allow state or local governments to implement property taxes on tribal land,’ among other issues.”

**How A 672,000-Gallon Oil Spill Was Nearly Invisible.**

The [New York Times](#) (10/29, Caron) reports that when an oil pipeline owned by LLOG Exploration, lying about a mile below the surface of the Gulf of Mexico, fractured in early October, about 672,000 gallons of oil escaped, in what appears “to be the largest since the Deepwater Horizon explosion in 2010.” However, “hardly any of it was visible” on the surface, as “the oil seemed to have completely disappeared.” The oil, under high pressure and seeping through a small fracture, escaped in droplets measured in microns, according to Lt. Cmdr. Steven Youde of the Coast Guard. Much of the oil was eaten by oil-degrading bacteria, with larger droplets that rose to the surface broken down by “sunlight, wind and wave action.”

**Lawmakers: High User Fees Could Hurt Acadia, National Parks.**

The [AP](#) (10/27) reports that “Maine’s congressional delegation is turning a critical eye on a U.S. Department of the Interior proposal to raise fees at national parks, including Acadia National Park.” Sens. Susan Collins and Angus King “sent a letter to the department after an announcement that it’s proposing increasing fees at 17 national parks. The peak season increases would help offset overdue maintenance costs.” They “say the department should consider creating a National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund or Conservation Service Corp to help address the backlog.”

**Too Many Tourists: Crowding Is A Big Headache At National Parks And Theme Parks.**

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (10/28, Martin) reports that “across the country, people have been trekking to national parks, theme parks and other tourist attractions in record numbers during the past few years, creating an unexpected problem for the tourism industry: too many customers.” Without a solution, managers “fear that long lines and unruly crowds ultimately will turn off future visitors.”

**Parks Service Denies Permit For Giant Statue Of Naked Woman On National Mall.**

The [CNN](#) (10/27, Tatum) reports that “the group behind an effort to bring a 45-foot-tall sculpture of a naked woman to the National Mall says it is ‘looking to formalize litigation’ after the National Park Service denied approval of the statue.” Natalie White, spokeswoman for Catharsis on the Mall, said in a statement, “We need a law firm willing to take on overly restrictive NPS rules that inappropriately seem to value the preservation of the perceived aesthetic of the National Mall over First Amendment activities. Historical use of this public space includes free-speech demonstrations that continue to shape the character of our country.”

**Feds Pull Funding For Black Panther Legacy Project In Berkeley After Backlash.**

The [Washington Examiner](#) (10/29, Lim) reports that “a Black Panther Party legacy project at the University of California Berkeley will no longer proceed after the National Park Service bowed to pressure applied by conservative organizations and pulled federal funding, according to a report.” The National Park Service “announced in September it would award \$98,000 to Ula Taylor, UC Berkeley’s incoming African-American studies chairwoman,” for the Black Panther Party Research, Interpretation & Memory Project. Spokesman Craig Dalby said, “After an additional review of the project, the [National Park Service] decided not to move forward with funding the project.”

**Culture Of Harassment At NPS ‘Completely Unacceptable’.**

The [Rafu Shimpo \(CA\)](#) (10/26) reports that Sen. Mazie K. Hirono, ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, “on Oct. 13 called for action to be taken following the release of a National Park Service (NPS) survey that found that 38 percent of NPS employees have been harassed or discriminated against in the past year.” The Interior Department

"announced that NPS will receive additional resources to address complaints and expand training." Hirono said, "Today's announcement confirms what we've known for some time – there is a pervasive culture of workplace harassment in the National Park Service. Continued silence and inaction are completely unacceptable. Working together, we can provide the necessary oversight and resources to ensure that all NPS employees – regardless of age, race, gender, and sexual orientation – have a safe working environment."

**FEDERAL REGISTER LISTINGS:**

Notices submitted to the Federal Register for Friday, October 27:

REG0007480 NPS NIC - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Region, Anchorage, AK N2857 -- This is a Notice of Inventory Completion pursuant to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of an inventory of human remains and associated funerary objects under the control of the Alaska Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The human remains and associated funerary objects were recovered from Kodiak Island Borough, Alaska. Notice 10/27/2017

REG0007481 NPS NIC - U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, DC N2860 -- This is a Notice pursuant to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), 25 U.S.C. 3003 of the completion of an inventory of human remains and associated funerary objects under the control of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, DC. The Human remains and associated funerary objects were removed from a site in the southern portion of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana, Glacier County, MT. Notice 10/27/2017

REG0007570 NPS National Register of Historic Places, October 14, 2017 -- The NPS is soliciting comments on the significance of properties nominated before October 14, 2017, for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or related actions. Notice 10/27/2017

REG0007566 ONRR Cancellation Meeting Notice: U.S. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Multi-Stakeholder Group Advisory Committee Meeting is scheduled for November 15-16, 2017. Notice 10/27/2017